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# I. Introduction

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21), enacted by Congress in 1998, continued what began with the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991. It specified the systems on which certain funds can be used, expanded the kinds of activities for which funds can be used and still promoted the role of the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in the planning and programming of projects. TEA-21 required each designated MPO to develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and the state to develop a Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as a condition to securing federal funds for transportation projects. Currently, TEA-21 has been extended through May 2005, and Congress will start all over to draft a new transportation act. When a new act is signed into law, WSDOT will amend the STIP accordingly.

In February 2002, the Washington Transportation Commission adopted the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP) as WSDOT's long-range (20-year) plan for transportation project development. By updating the WTP, the commission and WSDOT are able to serve as an integral part of the planning and programming process required by TEA-21.

TEA-21 also required each MPO TIP to have a financial plan that addressed all federally funded and/or regionally significant projects inside the MPO's area of responsibility. Projects listed in the STIP are the only projects that will be approved by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to utilize federal funds. The STIP is a three-year, fiscally constrained and prioritized program of transportation projects, compiled from local and regional plans, along with the WTP, which provides a backbone for developing projects for the intermodal transportation network in the State of Washington. At this time WSDOT is basing its financial plan on 2004 figures. This too will need to be updated after a new act is signed. (See **Appendix B – Financial Feasibility Table.**)

The STIP contains federally funded projects plus state and local regionally significant projects programmed for Calendar Years 2005, 2006 and 2007. These projects have been identified through the planning process as the highest priority for the available funding to the state's transportation program.

Included in the STIP are state and local roadway, bridge, bicycle, pedestrian, safety and public transportation (transit) projects. Project related activities, such as PE (Preliminary Engineering), RW (Right of Way) and CN (Construction) are eligible for roadways, etc.; and Capital and Operating expenses for public transit. The projects are organized in alphabetical order by MPO, County and Lead Agency and are shown in a standardized format, which includes similar information for each project.

The regulations (23 CFR 450.216(a)(2)) require that the STIP present a financially constrained program of projects that will be implemented during a three-year period. This cannot be completely accomplished in Washington since WSDOT is limited by statute to a two-year capital construction program. Accordingly, an investment level approach has been used for the third year of the STIP. The investment level is based upon the planned amount of funding for the various programs.

## **I. Introduction** (cont.)

WSDOT uses a priority programming process that first identifies needs for a 20-year period that can be accomplished within financial constraints. This is done through the State Highway System Plan (HSP). In order to be eligible for programming, a need must be first identified in the HSP. The needs contained in the HSP do not have start dates and can occur anytime during the 20-year period. The HSP is updated every 2 years and defines service level objectives, action strategies, and costs. It includes an extensive public involvement process. From the HSP, a 6-year implementation plan is developed. The Six-Year Plan is constrained to the investment level for a three-biennium period and is used in the budget development process. Only the first two years of the Six-Year Plan contains specific projects. The last four years contains funding levels for the different programs. Projects are then included for programming in the two-year budget from the Six-Year Plan.

Administering the STIP in prior years has often proven cumbersome. Provisions of Section 1204(f) of TEA-21 provided the means to alleviate this problem. These provisions allowed the State to combine non-regionally significant and environmentally neutral projects, previously listed as individual projects in the MPO TIPs, into statewide groupings or 'buckets' by funding source.

All MPO TIPs (MTIPs) have been forwarded to and approved by the Governor. Their projects are listed individually in the STIP, except for those projects that have been grouped.

The STIP is fiscally balanced and includes only those projects selected for available funding or of having a reasonable expectation of obtaining funds. Federal funds for Fiscal Years 2005, 2006 and 2007 are program estimates and will not be final until after the federal budget is approved on or about October 1 of each year.

## **II. Financial Plan and Resources**

### ***A. Federal***

The financial plan assumes the same trend as TEA-21 for the next Transportation Act's funds apportioned for highways and authorized for public transit will be available. We are assuming that the gross level of funds available in 2005, 2006 and 2007 will be approximately \$525M, plus any Discretionary funding, annually.

The following are descriptions of fund sources identified in TEA-21, however, some of these fund sources may be revised or discontinued under provisions of the new act.

Interstate Maintenance (IM): This program is for the rehabilitation, restoration, and resurfacing of the Interstate system only. The state selects and prioritizes all projects for funding.

National Highway System (NHS): The NHS includes the Interstate as well as other nationally significant routes, approximately 3,420 miles of roads and highways within Washington. The state selects and prioritizes projects for funding. There are about 118 miles

of local NHS routes and WSDOT has given the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and/or

***A. Federal*** (cont.)

Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs) an equal amount of STP funds in exchange for their proportionate NHS dollars to streamline the administration of the funds.

Bridge (BR): The Bridge Replacement/Bridge Rehabilitation Program provides assistance for eligible bridges on public roads.

**Surface Transportation Program (STP)**: This program is for both local agencies and WSDOT for use on functionally classified roads above urban local access or rural minor collector. The following types of programs are available:

Safety (STPS): 10% of STP funds are set aside for safety improvements. The objective of this program is to identify, implement and evaluate cost-effective safety construction projects. This program is further broken down into the Hazard Elimination Safety Program (STPH) and the Railway/Highway Crossing Program (STPX). These funds are made available to all state and local agencies and tribal nations within Washington and can be applied to all public roadways. The state prioritizes and selects projects for funding. Environmentally neutral and non-Regionally Significant safety projects are located in a statewide safety grouping in the STIP.

Enhancement (STPE): 10% of STP funds are set aside for transportation enhancement projects (bikeways/walkways; highway beautification; acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites; historic preservation, rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings including a provision for tourist and welcome centers; preservation of abandoned railway corridors; control and removal of outdoor advertising; archaeological planning and research; environmental mitigation of water pollution due to highway runoff or reduction of vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity; safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists; and establishment of transportation museums). The process for selecting Enhancement projects requires each MPO/RTPO to establish their own criteria for prioritizing projects, and rank the projects collected in their respective areas. The MPO/RTPO prioritized projects are forwarded to the Enhancement Advisory Committee (EAC), who make a list of recommended statewide selections, which is then forwarded to the Secretary of Transportation for approval. All enhancement projects that are CE are located in a statewide enhancement grouping in the STIP.

Regional STP (STPUL, STPUS, STPR): Formula allocations of these funds to the MPO/RTPO or county lead agencies are based on population and road mileage. The MPO/RTPO or county lead agency selects and prioritizes projects for funding.

STP Competitive (STPC): This is a portion of the STP funds that can be used in any area of the State. The purpose of the program is to offer multimodal choices to the public. Projects of this funding type are programmed in the STIP, either in a grouping or listed individually.

WSDOT's STP (STP): This is a portion of the STP funds that are for state highway system preservation and interstate reconstruction. The WSDOT selects and prioritizes these projects.

#### ***A. Federal*** (Cont.)

Rural Economic Vitality (REV): This category uses a portion of STP flexible funds for transportation infrastructure projects that promote or preserve economic development in rural counties and specific empowerment zones within urbanized areas. The WSDOT and the Community Economic Revitalization Board (CERB) select and prioritize these projects.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ): The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) category addresses congestion mitigation and air quality improvement in non-attainment and/or maintenance areas of the state. Funds are distributed to non-attainment areas based on their population and the severity of air quality non-attainment. The MPO selects and prioritizes projects for funding.

High Priority Projects: The High Priority Projects Program provides designated funding for specific projects (commonly referred to as 'demonstration' or 'Demo' projects) identified by Congress, and is now included in 23 U.S.C. 117. TEA-21 included 1,850 of these projects, each with a specified amount of funding over the 6 years of TEA-21. The designated funding can only be used for the project as described in the law, [1601(a)]. Currently, there are approximately thirty "high priority" or 'Demo' projects in Washington State.

FTA Section 3037: The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program provides funding for capital and operating assistance for service expansion aimed at transporting welfare recipients and eligible low-income individuals to and from jobs and other job-related activities. Funds may also be used for service expansion designed to transport residents from urban areas, urbanized areas, and non-urbanized areas to suburban employment opportunities.

FTA Section 5307: These funds are apportioned by a formula to each urbanized area, and are available for planning, capital and operating assistance. Where they exist, the transportation management area (TMA) and the designated recipient determine the programming of these funds. WSDOT is the designated recipient for the Bellingham, Longview, Olympia, Tri-Cities, Wenatchee and Yakima urbanized areas.

FTA Section 5309: This is the only FTA transit discretionary program that provides funding for major capital needs such as light or commuter rail systems' development, large bus or rail fleet purchases and construction of transit facilities.

FTA Section 5310: These funds are designed to provide passenger equipment to meet the special needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities. Section 5310 specifically assists private, nonprofit organizations in obtaining equipment to provide service where transportation services for this group are unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate for their use. WSDOT programs rural Section 5310 projects in a statewide grouping in the STIP, while MPOs program this type of project within their respective areas.

FTA Section 5311: These funds are apportioned by a formula to each state, and include RTAP, intercity bus programs, state administration, and both capital planning and operating assistance. WSDOT programs all Section 5311 projects in a statewide grouping in the STIP.

## ***A. Federal*** (Cont.)

### **Other Federal Sources:**

State Infrastructure Bank (SIB): SIBs are pools of money that can be used to finance infrastructure projects, such as roads, bridges and mass transit systems. The funds can be used to provide low interest loans or to enhance credit and the affordability of loans from other sources. Once projects are completed, funds are paid back into SIB through revenues generated by the project.

The Federal Lands Highways Program: Funding is managed by FHWA. There is limited state authority over this category of funding. The Federal Lands Highways Program includes the following categories of roads:

- Indian Reservation Roads (BIA);
- Park Roads and Parkways;
- Public Lands Highways;
- Forest Highways program; and
- Refuge Roads

Indian Reservation Roads (IRR): are public roads that provide access to and within Indian reservations, Indian trust land, restricted Indian land, and Alaska native villages. IRR funds can be used for any type Title 23 transportation project providing access to or within Federal or Indian lands. All Indian Reservation Road projects are grouped in the STIP in the BIA bucket, unless environmentally sensitive.

Park Roads and Parkways program funds may only be used on public roads under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service (NPS).

A Public Lands Highways road is defined as a forest road, or any highway through unappropriated or unreserved public lands, non-taxable Indian lands, or other Federal reservations that are under the jurisdiction of, and maintained by a public authority and open to public travel. Public Lands Highways funds are discretionary in nature. States propose projects that compete for funding on a nationwide basis through solicitation. Projects are solicited by the FHWA in the fall and selected around the beginning of the calendar year.

Forest Highways provide access to and within National Forest System.

Refuge roads are public roads that provide access to or within a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System and for which title and maintenance responsibility is vested in the United States Government.

Ferry Boat Discretionary: This is a national discretionary program for the construction of ferry boats and ferry terminal facilities. TEA-21 established a new \$20M set aside for NHS ferry facilities and Washington is allocated \$5M per year, beginning in 1999.

#### **Other Federal Sources: (Cont.)**

Scenic Byways: The National Scenic Byways Program provides for the designation, by the Secretary of Transportation, of roads that have outstanding scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational, and/or archaeological qualities as All-American Roads (AAR)/ National Scenic Byways (NSB). This program also provides discretionary grants for scenic byway projects on an AAR or NSB; state designated scenic byways; and for planning, designing, and developing State scenic byway programs.

National Corridor Planning and Development Program: The purpose of the National Corridor Planning and Development Program is to provide funding for coordinated planning, design, and construction of corridors of national significance, economic growth, and international or interregional trade.

Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program: This program's purpose is to improve the safe movement of people and goods at or across the border between the United States and Canada and the border between the United States and Mexico.

Transportation and Community and System Preservation (TCSP) Pilot Program: The purpose of this program is to provide funding for a comprehensive initiative including planning, implementation, and research grants to investigate and address the relationships between transportation and community and system preservation and to identify private sector-based initiatives.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Program: The purpose of this program is to accelerate the integration and interoperability of intelligent transportation systems (ITS) across system boundaries, to improve transportation efficiency, promote safety, increase traffic flow, improve traveler information, enhance alternative transportation modes, build on existing intelligent transportation system projects or promote tourism.

Recreational Trails Program: This program's purpose is to provide funds to develop and maintain recreational trails for motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users.

Over-the-Road Bus Accessibility Program: This program will assist in financing the incremental capital and training costs associated with implementing the USDOT's Final Rule on accessibility requirements for Over-the-Road Buses (OTRBs).

Access to Jobs Program: A coordinated transportation/human service planning mechanism is required to develop Access to Jobs programs and transit agencies must approve these programs. This program also authorizes a reverse commute program to provide services to suburban employment centers from urban centers, rural areas and other suburban locations

and is now listed as FTA Section 3037.

Clean Fuels Formula Grant Program: The program's purpose is to assist transit operators in the purchase of low-emissions buses and related equipment; the construction of alternative-fuel fueling facilities; the modification of garage facilities to accommodate clean-fuel vehicles; and to assist in the utilization of bio-diesel fuel.

**Other Federal Sources: (Cont.)**

Transit Enhancement: Transit enhancement projects must enhance mass transportation service or use and be physically or functionally related to transit facilities.

***B. State***

The Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax: The primary funding source of state highway maintenance, construction and arterial construction. In addition, the state-shared Motor Vehicle Fuel Tax is a significant funding source of local highway maintenance and arterial construction.

Arterial Improvement Program (AIP): Funding which is provided for arterial street improvements for cities and portions of counties within urban areas. (TIB administered program.)

City Hardship Assistance Account (CHAA): Provides funding to offset extraordinary costs associated with the transfer of state highways to cities having populations under 20,000. (TIB administered program).

Pedestrian Safety & Mobility Program (PSMP): Program provides funds to projects that promote pedestrian mobility and safety as a viable transportation choice; e.g. provide access and address system continuity and connectivity of pedestrian facilities. (TIB administered program.)

Small City Program (SCP): Small city (under 5,000 population) projects are selected based on the condition of the pavement, roadway geometrics and safety. (TIB administered program.)

Transportation Partnerships Program (TPP): Provides funding for transportation projects in urban counties/cities with populations over 5,000 or in Transportation Benefit Districts that encourage economic development and public/private partnerships. (TIB administered program.)

Rural Arterial Program (RAP): This is a state fund for financing arterial road improvements in rural areas.

County Arterial Preservation Program (CAPP): This state-fund program is designed to assist counties to preserve their existing paved arterial road network.

Public Works Trust Fund (PWTF): This is a loan program developed by the State Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development and administered by the



Public Works Board to provide low interest loans to local governments to complete needed infrastructure improvements.

Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB): Provides state funds to be combined with partnership funding from freight mobility and freight mitigation projects along strategic freight corridors.

#### ***B. State (Cont.)***

Other State Funding Sources (OTHER): All other unidentified state fund sources.

#### ***C. Local***

Local: Transportation funding sources are primarily from the property tax for highway projects and the sales tax for transit projects. Other sources of revenue for highway projects include moneys from street use permits, impact fees, LIDs, etc.

#### ***D. Financing Techniques***

##### Advance Construction:

This process will continue to be used as a short-term technique (normally three to six months) for managing federal funding availability with FHWA by allowing projects to get started prior to actual availability of the obligation authority. This technique typically occurs during the last few months of the federal fiscal year and during the first quarter of the next federal fiscal year, when the remaining obligation authority or apportionment is low. Numerous constraints must be met before construction can be advanced. All normal authorization procedures will be followed and projects must be authorized by the FHWA prior to advertisement.

Due to the cash flow constraints in TEA-21 for the High Priority Projects, WSDOT will utilize the advance construction process in authorizing most of those projects. A portion of the projects will be converted annually to match the cash flow distribution in TEA-21.

A similar process is used for FTA projects called a 'Letter of No Prejudice'. This technique allows transit agencies to start their projects prior to receipt of funds.

### **III. Consistency with Statewide Plan**

In February 2002, the Washington State Transportation Commission adopted the updated Washington Transportation Plan (2003-2022). This 20-year, fiscally constrained document outlines the service objectives and strategies for maintaining, operating, preserving, and improving the state transportation system. It also outlines a financial funding strategy that identifies the responsibilities for implementation and establishes needs for the system.

The Department worked with metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and regional transportation planning organizations (RTPOs) to select the deficiencies (and the conceptual

solutions to address them) that would be included in the Highway System Plan within this financial constraint. System Plan service objectives provide policy direction for each program. The constrained Highway System Plan determines which system deficiencies are eligible for project programming. Biennial investment levels in all programs are based on the 20-year target level and the expenditure plan defined in the Highway System Plan. Preservation Program levels and project priorities are developed from the appropriate TEA-21 management systems (i.e., pavement and bridge).

Improvement Program levels and project priorities are based on available revenues and cost benefit analyses. Each subprogram uses benefit/cost methodologies applicable to the specific subprogram.

From the list of Benefit/Cost (B/C) prioritized projects, the Transportation Commission selects a mix of projects providing the greatest net benefit to transportation users. This prioritized program is submitted biennially to the Legislature for funding authorization and is included in this STIP.

## **IV. Operations and Maintenance**

### ***A. State System***

The State's budget for operations and maintenance is approximately \$330 million for each state fiscal year in this year's STIP. This includes all costs necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the state highway system.

### ***B. Local System***

The aggregate amount of cities and counties budget for operations and maintenance is approximately \$360 million for each fiscal year in this year's STIP. This includes all costs necessary for the safe and efficient operation of the local transportation system.

Governmental transit systems budget approximately \$829 million annually for operations, maintenance, contracted services, administration, and planning.

Operations and maintenance are those expenses of labor, goods and services necessary for the provision of safe and responsive transportation facilities and services, but does not include special bonding, etc. for exceptionally large projects, such as, Sound Transit's match funding.

## **V. Public Involvement**

Existing planning activities of state and local governments are an essential part of integrated regional planning processes. Long range transportation planning is a part of the comprehensive land use planning carried out by local governments. Citizen participation is an integral part of the planning process at all levels. Local Agencies are required to develop and adopt a six-year transportation program. All local agencies are required to hold at least

one public hearing during the development of the six-year transportation program. The ‘funding-secured’ projects from the first three years of the six-year program are incorporated into the STIP.

Additional opportunities for public participation occur at the MPO and RTPO levels. Each MPO/RTPO is required to provide continuous public involvement during the development of the regional TIP. Specifically, the public involvement process for STIP is as follows:

1. Local agencies hold a public hearing on their six-year transportation plan.
2. The MPO/RTPO holds a public meeting and/or public forum in August or September of each year. This provides the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the transportation improvement program within the region. This meeting is coordinated with all of the member jurisdictions within the region.
3. The Transportation Commission and the state legislature seek meaningful public involvement during all phases of the biennial budget development and approval process.
4. A “draft” STIP is available for public review in each WSDOT regional office in December, while it is being reviewed by FHWA/FTA/EPA. The public can access the “approved” STIP via the Internet or view a hard copy in the WSDOT regional offices in January, once federal approval has been received.

## **VI. Project Selection**

TEA-21 required a project selection process that "selects" the projects for implementation from the STIP. The ‘first year’ projects of the STIP are automatically deemed selected for implementation. WSDOT is responsible for the statewide coordination of the STIP. Once local agency projects are programmed and selected, WSDOT-Highways & Local Programs manages its federal highway dollars on a first-come, first-served basis, while WSDOT manages their federal highway dollars based on a biennial program of projects. This assures that all federal funds are utilized in a timely manner. For example, if a local agency project in Year One cannot be built according to schedule because of right-of-way problems, then a second or third year project could move forward as long as it has been previously selected by the MPO.

MPOs are responsible for the management of their MTIPs, i.e. their regional portion of the STIP. The regional procedures allow any federal project included in the STIP to be advanced or delayed without a STIP amendment contingent upon the financial balance being maintained for each fiscal year.

## **VII. STIP Management**

### ***A. Grouped Projects***

Grouping of projects is done on a statewide basis to ease in the administration of the STIP. Again, only those projects that are categorically excluded (CE) and non-regionally

significant will be grouped by source of funds. All others will be listed individually by phase. Some projects are programmed individually in the MTIPS. Only the grouping name (fund source) and the amount of funds budgeted for the category will be shown. For actual project listings, please contact Dave Zevenbergen (360) 705-7384 or see the applicable MPO TIP for the individual project.

When a project is no longer eligible for a grouping, (if the environmental status changes to an EA or EIS) the State will process a STIP correction moving the project out of the grouping to display the individual project in the STIP.

***The following groupings are included in the 2005 STIP:***

**Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)** - Projects funded from the Federal Lands Highways Program. (Typically included with other Discretionary funding sources.)

**STP** - This group contains projects that are classified as CE and not regionally significant. Projects will include design, right-of way and construction of: pedestrian/bike paths, resurfacing, reconstruction, channelization and signals, safety improvements, seismic retrofit, bridge deck repair, bridge cleaning and painting, planning and transportation demand programs. For individual projects, please see the MPO TIPs.

**STP Enhancement** - This group contains projects that are classified as CE and not regionally significant. Projects will include design, right-of-way and construction of: pedestrian/bike paths, scenic or historic highway programs, mitigation of water pollutions etc. For individual projects, please see the MPO TIPs.

**STP Safety** - This group contains projects that are classified as CE and not regionally significant. Projects will include design, right-of-way and construction of: rail crossing improvements and hazardous location improvements. For individual projects, please see the MPO TIPs.

**Bridge** - This group contains projects, classified as CE and not regionally significant, will include design, right-of-way and construction of: bridge replacement, rehabilitation, painting and seismic improvements. For individual projects, please see the MPO TIPs.

**Discretionary** - This group contains all projects included in the FFY-2005 Appropriations Bill that are classified as CE and not regionally significant; e.g. ITS, NCPD, TCSP, PLHD, FBD, Innovative Bridges, Scenic Byways, FAA, FRA et al.

**3037** - This group contains projects from the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program. This is an FTA administered program.

**5310** - This group contains three categories of statewide projects serving the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities primarily through private, nonprofit organizations. These projects, classified as CE and not regionally significant, will include: program administration, purchases of passenger vehicles; and purchase of service agreements.

**5311** - This group contains five categories of statewide projects serving the public transportation needs of rural communities. These projects, classified as CE and not regionally significant, will include: program administration; purchases of passenger revenue vehicles; a 15% earmark for intercity bus program projects; operating assistance projects; and Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) technical assistance.

### ***B. STIP Amendment Process***

After the STIP has been approved by FHWA and FTA there may be a need to amend the STIP to reflect changes. Some examples of changes that would trigger the need for a STIP amendment are: adding or deleting a new project to the STIP, or any change requiring a new regional air quality conformity finding. (See **Table C**: Examples of Corrections and Amendments)

STIP amendments, initiated by either the project sponsor and/or an MPO, are submitted to the WSDOT - Highways & Local Programs for processing. After review and approval by WSDOT, the amendment is submitted to FHWA and FTA for their approval.

Amending a MPO TIP for an area designated as a non-attainment or maintenance area requires air quality conformity determination, unless the amendment includes only "neutral" projects for air quality purposes. Approval of a STIP amendment at the state and federal level is dependent upon appropriate public involvement and continued financial constraint of the STIP. WSDOT - Highways & Local Programs will notify the regions and MPOs of the status of STIP amendments and keep the Internet amendment status summary regularly updated. The WSDOT regions are responsible for notifying their appropriate partners.